

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for forming a component for a vehicle comprising:
providing a substrate ~~comprising a relatively rigid material and a skin, the~~
substrate having a channel and the skin having a protrusion;
~~providing a~~ locating the skin adjacent at least a portion of the substrate such
that a cavity is formed between the substrate and the skin;
coupling at least a portion of the skin to the substrate by inserting at least a
portion of the protrusion of the skin into the channel; and
introducing a material into the cavity after securing at least a portion of the
skin to the substrate;
wherein the skin and the material introduced into the cavity form a cushioned
region for the vehicle component.
2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the component comprises an
interior panel for a vehicle.
3. (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the component comprises a door
panel.
4. (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the component is formed such that
the skin is provided in a region of the interior panel intended to be contacted by a passenger in
a vehicle.
5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, ~~further comprising forming the~~
~~skin utilizing a slush molding process wherein the protrusion is formed by a "U"-shaped~~
portion of the skin or a solid portion extending from the skin.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of forming the skin utilizing at least one of a slush molding process, a vacuum forming process, an injection molding process, an extrusion process, ~~and~~ or a casting process.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the skin is formed of a material selected from the group consisting of textiles, polyurethane, polyvinylchloride, a thermoplastic olefin, and combinations thereof.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the material introduced into the cavity is a polymeric material.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, wherein the material introduced into the cavity is a foam material.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of introducing the material into the cavity comprises introducing the material into the cavity and expanding the material.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 9, wherein the foam material is introduced into the cavity through an aperture formed in the substrate.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the substrate comprises a material selected from the group consisting of a metal, a metal alloy, and a polymer.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising forming a bond between the material introduced into the cavity and at least one of the substrate and the skin.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of coupling at least a portion of the skin to the substrate further comprises ~~securing the skin to the substrate~~ with utilizing a vacuum device.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the substrate includes at least one aperture and air within the cavity is drawn through the aperture by the vacuum device.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~the skin includes a first feature configured for coupling with a second feature provided on the substrate, and wherein the step of coupling the skin to the substrate comprises coupling the first feature to the second feature~~ the substrate further comprises a depression and wherein the channel and the skin are located within the depression.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~16~~ 1, wherein ~~the step of coupling the skin to the substrate further comprises utilizing a vacuum device to couple the skin to the substrate~~ the skin is coupled to the substrate by a friction or interference fit between the projection and the channel.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~17~~ 14, wherein the substrate includes an aperture provided therethrough and the step of utilizing a vacuum device comprises drawing air through the aperture in the substrate to secure the skin to the substrate.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the aperture is provided in the substrate at the location where the ~~first feature is coupled to the second feature~~ protrusion engages the channel.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the component includes an exterior surface having a boundary formed between the skin and the substrate, and wherein the aperture is provided in the substrate at a location intermediate the location of the boundary and the location where the ~~first feature is coupled to the second feature~~ protrusion engages the channel.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the component includes an exterior surface having a boundary formed between the skin and the substrate, and wherein the location where the ~~first feature is coupled to the second feature~~ protrusion engages the channel is provided intermediate the location of the boundary and the location of the aperture.

22. (Currently Amended) A method for forming a panel for a passenger compartment of a vehicle, ~~the panel having localized regions of cushioning~~, the method comprising:

providing a relatively rigid substrate and a relatively flexible material, the substrate having one or more apertures;

~~providing a~~ locating the relatively flexible material ~~over adjacent at least a~~ portion of the substrate, wherein a cavity is formed between the substrate and the relatively flexible material;

coupling at least a portion of the relatively flexible material to the substrate by drawing a vacuum through the aperture; and

introducing a foam material to the cavity ~~after coupling at least a portion of the relatively flexible material to the substrate~~;

wherein the relatively flexible material and the foam material form a cushioned area in the panel.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, wherein ~~the step of coupling at least a portion of the relatively flexible material to the substrate comprises utilizing a vacuum to couple the relatively flexible material to the substrate~~ the substrate includes a channel and the relatively flexible material includes a protrusion and the step of coupling the relatively flexible material to the substrate comprises inserting at least a portion of the protrusion into the channel.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein ~~the step of coupling at least a portion of the relatively flexible material to the substrate further comprises coupling a first feature provided as part of the substrate to a second feature provided as part of the relatively flexible material~~ the aperture extending through the substrate is located in the channel.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 24 23, wherein ~~the step of coupling the relatively flexible material to the substrate further comprises utilizing a vacuum device to couple the relatively flexible material to the substrate~~ the aperture extending through the substrate is located between the protrusion and a lateral edges of the relatively flexible material.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 25 23, wherein ~~the substrate includes an aperture provided therethrough and the step of utilizing a vacuum comprises drawing air through the aperture to secure the relatively flexible material to the substrate~~ the protrusion on the relatively flexible material is located between the aperture extending through the substrate and the lateral edge of the relatively flexible material.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 26 23, wherein the panel includes an exterior surface having an interface formed between the relatively flexible material and the substrate, and wherein the aperture is provided in the substrate at a location intermediate the location of the interface and the location where the ~~first feature is coupled to the second feature~~ protrusion engages the channel.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 26 23, wherein the panel includes an exterior surface having an interface formed between the relatively flexible material and the substrate, and wherein the location where the ~~first feature is coupled to the second feature~~ protrusion engages the channel is provided intermediate the location of the interface and the location of the aperture.

30-33. (Cancelled)

34. (New) A trim component for a vehicle comprising:
a substrate having a channel
a skin having a protrusion and coupled to the substrate by engagement of the protrusion with the channel;
a foam material disposed between the skin and the substrate;
wherein the skin and the foam material form a cushioned region for the vehicle component.

35. (New) The trim component of Claim 34, wherein the skin is coupled to the substrate by a friction or interference fit between the projection and the channel.

36. (New) The trim component of Claim 34, wherein the protrusion is formed as a “U”-shaped portion of the skin or a solid portion extending from the skin.

37. (New) The trim component of Claim 34, wherein the substrate includes at least one vacuum aperture that extends through the substrate and used to draw a vacuum through the substrate to couple the skin to the substrate when the foam material is injected into a space between the skin and the cavity.

38. (New) The trim component of Claim 37, wherein the vacuum aperture is located in the channel.

39. (New) The trim component of Claim 37, wherein the vacuum aperture extending through the substrate is located between the protrusion and a lateral edges of the skin.

40. (New) The trim component of Claim 37, wherein the protrusion is located between the vacuum aperture extending through the substrate and the lateral edge of the skin.